

LOCALE

Orange County

Brittany MCGOWAN

**ALL HATS ON DECK
PREPPING FOR DEL MAR'S
OPENING DAY**

DO EXPERT

Dude.

SIX OF OUR FAVORITES FROM THE MALE SPECIES

WRITTEN BY: KRISTAL DOCTER, ALEKA ERICKSON, NATALIE HOLTZ & JESSIE SETKUS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY: ADAM GENTRY & JEFF FARSAI



Even though there are billions upon billions of stars in the night sky, very few shine brightly enough to be detected by the naked eye. The brightest stars—whether by proximity or size—hide, overshadow and disguise the beauty of stars nearby that deserve the same phenomenon holds area the size of Orange County, this same phenomenon holds true. There are people you should know more about. These people shine very brightly in their own space and time. We found five such people. And, not just people—dudes. I don't mean "dudes" in the vernacular of Sean Penn (Spicoli) in "Fast Times at Ridgemont

High" or Ashton Kutcher (Jesse Montgomery III) in "Dude, Where's My Car?" but rather the way it was first intended in the late 1900s (it was considered a compliment, referring to how one dressed or rather appeared); to be pulled together, to have the appearance of having "it" together. Our focus in this interview, which taps entrepreneurs, a skateboarder and an attorney, is to shine a light on personalities that we feel should be gravitating into your consciousness and are deserving of our collective attention. We hope you enjoy this first installment of our spotlight series as we get "all duded up."

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Even though there are billions upon billions of stars in the night sky, very few shine brightly enough to be detected by the naked eye. The brightest stars—whether by proximity or size—hide, overshadow and disguise the beauty of stars nearby that deserve the same attention. In a large area the size of Orange County, this same phenomenon holds true. There are people you should know more about. These people shine very brightly in their own space and time. We found five such people. And, not just people—dudes. I don't mean "dudes" in the vernacular of Sean Penn (Spicoli) in "Fast Times at Ridgemont

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"When you live in your strengths, creativity skyrockets. Mediocre is not good enough—it actually repels me, good does not survive; only excellent survives the test of time."

NAME: Larry Broughton
COMPANY: Broughton Hotels
TITLE: President & CEO

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Perfection. It's the undeniable pursuit of excellence. The Greeks call it "arête." This noble quest sometimes seems to be forgotten because of things such as money, fame, notoriety, pride...the list goes on. So often companies overlook the important things: community, relationships, creativity and authenticity as a means of success, but not at Broughton Hotels. While the world was being torn from its pedestal and successful businesses ceased to be after the recession hit its hardest, Broughton not only survived...it thrived. Why? Behind every successful business there is an influentially sublime figurehead, a person with the "third eye," the one who ultimately makes their vision come to life—this man is Larry Broughton.

Larry has built his dream from the ground up by creating this luxury, boutique chain of hotels that are located in both Southern California as well as Chicago. What makes Broughton different from every other hotel chain is the experience it offers to their hotel guests. "No" does not fall into their vocabulary and their friendly staff will call you by your first name. (Gone is the stuffy "Mr. and Mrs." Lingo.) Talk about feeling right at home. Larry believes that customer service is a dying art in our time, so he carefully selects those who are the absolute cream of the crop to represent him and his fabulous chain to take care of his clients. Yes, I said clients because everyone that walks through Broughton's doors isn't just a customer, they are much more than that; they help build the community at Broughton.

Anyone can take a vacation to Santa Barbara and wake up feeling like they are in another place, but Broughton prides themselves on soaking up the culture they are in and letting it shine through. If you are in Santa Barbara, you are in Santa Barbara, you came here for a reason and everything around you should be celebrating that! All of Larry's hotels are masterfully crafted to give his guests the ultimate experience, and have them walking out of the doors excited to return. Broughton Hotels are a creative, relaxing and luxurious way to spend your well deserved time off; if you want a home away from home, then this is the experience for you.

Q: Tell me about your humble beginnings; what started Broughton Hotels?

Larry Broughton: (laughs) Where do I begin? I was in the military for nine years, paid my way through school; I did some martial arts as well at the time. I was a pretty busy guy, but I came out to Southern California, and once I got a taste of it, I knew I had to be here. Eventually, I got a job in a dive hotel and worked the graveyard shift...I really grew to love the industry.

Q: Ok Larry, let's not downplay your back-story. You were a Green Beret, you are a black belt, a successful hotel entrepreneur, a motivational speaker and also a bestselling author. Tell me about being an author.

LB: I am actually dyslexic, and I have found that the more I write, the clearer my thoughts become. I have always wanted to write a book, and once I put my mind to something, I will always succeed in what I do. I currently have two books out: "Victory," which is a book of entrepreneurial success strategies and "Flashpoints," which is about compartmentalizing your life. Did I also mention I like to teach?

Q: Wow, I think Dos Equis should look into hiring you as the Most Interesting Man in the World, but out of all of these facets, why did you choose to zero in on the hotel business?

LB: Everything I love is integrated together! Branding, team building, marketing, service—it is all there. Not only that, but we are building communities; the hotel business is a very intimate business. People are entrusting us to keep them safe, to feed them, to provide them with what they need. Overall, it is a great calling to serve others; it is an honor to make them feel welcome and to make their stay memorable.

Q: After doing some reading, I realized you opened your first hotel during the worst two-and-a-half-year period in the hospitality industry since the Great Depression. Why this specific time? How did you make it through it?

LB: Well, I definitely didn't choose it, that's for sure. In the late '90s the hotel business was booming, and I took a risk; you can't win big if you don't risk big...it was awful timing. 911 happened, SARS, you name it and it happened. I realized you couldn't be a lone wolf; you have to know when it is time to ask for help. I found coaches, mentors, anyone who would jump in to help. I was scared, I am going to be honest, but I knew we could get through this and we did. We thrived. We won Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year.

Q: You have hotels throughout Southern California and Chicago, are there any plans to expand into any other areas?

LB: Definitely. We are looking into Georgia, Texas, Washington and New Mexico. Nothing is set in stone yet, but these are some promising prospects.

Q: Broughton screams luxury. What amenities do your hotels have that make your guests feel like they are living the high-life?

LB: That is a great question. Every luxury hotel has the exquisite bath amenities and spa services, but our hotels know how people feel from a human perspective. The hotel business is all about relationships; customers are transactional, but clients are long-term relationships. Again, we are in the hospitality industry, and, quite frankly, a lot of hoteliers forget we are supposed to be...hospitable. Where does this start? It starts with the attitude we portray. When you walk up to the front desk, typically that person is called a front desk clerk. I don't know about you, but I don't want to be clerked. I want to be hosted—it is more endearing. Therefore, they are called Guest Services Hosts; that is the attitude we want, that's how we want to treat people. We can have all the gold and marble we want around a hotel, but if you are treated like garbage it isn't luxury.

Q: I would have to agree, the experience really is everything. What would you say is Broughton's claim to fame?

LB: We are authentic. Our motto is, "Authentic people delivering creative solutions." We do not get wrapped up in all the corporate bureaucracy. I would say our claim to fame is that we continue to grow, we take pride in excellence, and we are very approachable and authentic. What you see is what you get at Broughton Hotels. Also, when you live in your strengths, creativity skyrockets. Mediocre is not good enough—it actually repels me, good does not survive; only excellent survives the test of time.

Q: You pride yourselves on being a boutique organization. Explain why this brings you so much pride?

LB: If you stay in nameless, soulless branded hotels out there, you don't know if you are waking up in Bangkok, Boise or Baton Rouge, because it is just the same product and design as everybody else. What I love about the boutique industry is that it celebrates the location and the community where the hotel sits. People are looking for experiential stays. If you stay in our hotel in Santa Barbara, The Spanish Garden Inn, it celebrates Santa Barbara and its Spanish Mediterranean architecture. It's warm and inviting. The Georgian in Santa Monica is an Art Deco building; everything about it celebrates that era as well.

Q: Which hotel would you say is your most creative property?

LB: That is like asking me who my favorite child is (laughs). I would have to say the Sportsmen's Lodge in Studio City if I must pick. We are just finishing up an amazing renovation. It has been an icon in the valley for years; celebrities fish in the trout ponds and have the fish prepared for their meals. Many people in Southern California have some kind of connection to that hotel. I am really excited to say we have brought in experts for design, food and beverage, the rebranding, etcetera, to give the property a breath of fresh air, and I am excited to complete the renovation.

Q: How does it feel to be featured on "Hotel Impossible" as an expert hotelier brought in to help fix a failing hotel?

LB: It was exciting—not as much being on television though. Anthony Melchiorri has never called a hotel operator to come in and help him fix a business; he has always done it himself. He has brought in marketing people, designers, even food and beverage people, but never hotel operators. Anthony told me he called industry experts such as the California Lodging Association and told them he needed an expert hotelier to help him on this renovation and every expert's top of mind was Broughton Hotels. I was beyond honored. We didn't push and shove to get on TV, we were chosen. It's humbling.

Q: Now is your time to brag it up. What are some of your proudest accomplishments at Broughton Hotels?

LB: We have received many awards, and they are fantastic, believe me, but they are not my proudest accomplishments. My proudest accomplishment is creating opportunities for people that don't fit elsewhere. We tend to attract the black sheep of the industry; they care a little more and go that extra mile. It brings me joy. I am proud of the team for getting through this recession; we have all taken our bruises and we continued to dedicate ourselves to our core values. The payoff is putting another half dozen hotels to our portfolio within the next year. We never gave up. We never quit.

Q: Impressive. What is the future for Broughton Hotels?

LB: I don't really know other than it will be bright. I never have a well-defined strategic plan; I know a general direction that we are going, and I will keep us on track. George Patton said, "A good plan executed today is better than a perfect plan executed next week." That's the rule I live by.

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